



The President's Daily Brief

~~*Top Secret*~~ 18 April 1968



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LATE ITEM

Sierra Leone

One Sergeant-Major Amadu Rogers, speaking over the national radio this morning, announced that all senior army and police officers were under arrest and that Sierra Leone was now being run by the "Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement."

DAILY BRIEF
18 APRIL 1968

1. South Vietnam

The South Vietnamese apparently have been thinking out loud for several days about proposing an allied summit conference before bilateral talks between Washington and Hanoi get too far along. In the past ten days, Foreign Minister Do has tried the idea on the ambassadors from most of the countries with troops in South Vietnam.

If his talk with the Australian ambassador is any example, Do's pitch was a fairly strong one, although he made it clear that he was just thinking about the proposal at the moment. For instance, when the Australian tried to introduce a note of caution about the crowded schedules of government leaders, Do said "We could all go there" if President Johnson found it hard to leave Washington.

The South Vietnamese tell us that the Thais and South Koreans are receptive to the idea of a summit. The New Zealanders, on the other hand, think the important thing is to get US - North Vietnamese talks under way.

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Increased Communist pressure against Khe Sanh continued yesterday. Elsewhere in South Vietnam there was little significant contact with Communist forces.

2. South Vietnam

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3. Cambodia

Phnom Penh, having just barely gotten dissidence in western Cambodia under control, now faces a determined rebellion by tribal guerrillas in the northeast near the South Vietnamese border. The tribesmen are using relatively sophisticated tactics and automatic weapons. This leads us to suspect that they are getting some help from the Vietnamese Communists, who have long used the area as a sanctuary and thus have reasons of their own for blunting the government's current drive to expand its presence there.

4. Yugoslavia

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[redacted] a plot is afoot to remove Tito from power. [redacted] a group of party and government officials--principally Serbs--want to kick Tito upstairs. [redacted]

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[redacted] behind it lies a great deal of unhappiness over Tito's economic and foreign policies.

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5. Chile

Leftists in President Frei's own party are thinking of adding themselves to the many parties in the legislature currently wooing the Communists. They allegedly feel that Chile needs radical change, including nationalization of the US copper mines, and they think a broad movement which would include the Communists is the best way to get it.

The Communists' attractiveness to the other parties lies in their large and well organized delegation in the legislature. They would doubtless, however, extract major concessions before agreeing to join a leftist coalition.

Frei, of course, recently set the precedent himself by making a one-time deal with the Communists to get an important bill passed. In return the Communists demanded and got the removal of a key provision of his economic reform program. This deal apparently is coming home to haunt him.

6. South Korea

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7. Sierra Leone

The army rank-and-file, disgruntled at not being cut into the proceeds from the military regime's corruption, mutinied early today in the capital. Rumor has it that most of the junta has been either arrested or shot. Leaders of the mutiny are supposed to make a statement soon. All US citizens are safe.

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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

18 April 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

North Vietnamese Imply Warsaw or Nothing: The North Vietnamese are hinting broadly that they intend to insist on Warsaw as a site for initial contacts with the United States. They have not specifically ruled out acceptance of another city, but Hanoi's most recent propaganda carries an implicit threat to forgo the contact if the US continues to reject the North Vietnamese proposals.

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Yesterday a Nhan Dan article kept up the barrage of North Vietnamese commentary accusing the US of deliberately delaying preliminary contacts. Like other recent propaganda, the article reviewed the bidding of the past two weeks and quoted liberally from President Johnson's 31 March speech and other statements about US willingness to meet with North Vietnamese representatives. Recent US actions, said the article, make it "amply clear" that the United States is "not ready to go anywhere, at any time," and that the US is "deliberately trying to delay the contacts." Phnom Penh or Warsaw, said Nhan Dan, provide a "very suitable venue" for the contacts. It warned that "if the United States keeps rejecting either of these places, it only unmasks its hypocrisy and must bear the full responsibility."

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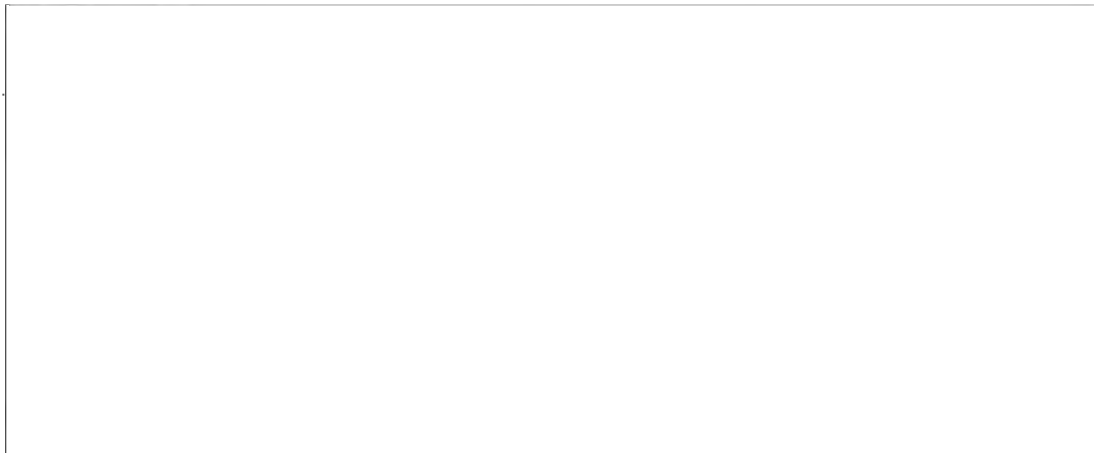
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Observations in Hanoi:

[redacted] morale seems high in the North Vietnamese capital, but there is an undercurrent of war weariness and fear of the authorities. [redacted] many North Vietnamese are afraid to be seen talking with foreigners.

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Social activity is restricted to the evening hours when Hanoi-ites stroll in the parks or go to the movies. These are the usual tractor-driver-meets-girl-worker type films produced in the bloc. There is no curfew in Hanoi.

[redacted] the Hanoi cathedral is often filled to standing room. Mass is said by a Caucasian priest.

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More Hanoi Commentary on General Abrams: Hanoi propaganda media are continuing to portray the appointment of General Abrams as a clear sign of the failure of American objectives in Vietnam. An article in the Hanoi army daily, broadcast in English on 16 April, claimed that Abrams' appointment will only "worsen the situation of the US aggressors." The broadcast noted that Abrams has been charged with beefing up the South Vietnamese forces, but insisted he would not be able to shift the brunt of the fighting onto the "puppet army." The paper discounted the possibility that the South Vietnamese forces would ever become an effective fighting force, even if equipped with more modern weapons.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Applauds Antiwar Activity in US: In a 15 April message [redacted]

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[redacted] the Vietnam Federation of Trade Unions hailed those in the US who were opposing the draft, the dispatch of American troops to Vietnam, and those who are demanding that the US "end immediately and unconditionally the bombings and war acts." The message also thanked the "progressive Americans" for their "precious support" of the Vietnamese people.

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